



*6th Annual Emerging and Existing Businesses  
of the Year Ceremony  
March 10, 2009*

# **Welcome Kansas Small Business Development Center Emerging and Existing Businesses of the Year!**



Governor Kathleen Sebelius

Small businesses are among our state's greatest assets, and the backbone of the innovation economy that moves Kansas forward. Our greatest successes lie before us and we must continue to look to the horizon for new opportunities.

I am proud to honor Kansas small businesses and Kansas entrepreneurs for their contributions to our state's future prosperity. I hope these awards serve as inspiration and encouragement as you grow your companies, industries and communities.

I would like to congratulate the KSBDC and wish you all luck on many more years of success and service!

# Welcome to the 2008 Kansas Small Business Development Center Emerging and Existing Businesses of the Year Ceremony



Wally Kearns, KSBDC State Director

The KSBDC team is extremely pleased to be able to honor the owners of the 2008 Emerging and Existing Businesses of the Year. These businesses were selected from over 2,000 businesses that received services from KSBDC regional and outreach centers in 2008. They are wonderful examples of businesses that are vitally important to the Kansas economy.

This is the 26<sup>th</sup> year of the KSBDC. During the past year we have grown and added locations and services to assist Kansas entrepreneurs. We welcomed two new outreach centers and will have additional outreach centers open in 2009. In an effort to provide outstanding online services, we partnered with Kansas.gov and now feature a redesigned website at [www.kansas.gov/ksbdc](http://www.kansas.gov/ksbdc). We are now part of the Kansas Business Center, the state's online "one-stop shop" for information vital to starting and growing a business in Kansas.

We hope that you will take a few minutes to visit with the award recipients and get to know the individuals that contribute so much to the economic prosperity of our great state. These businesses make our goal of "*Growing Kansas Entrepreneurs*" a true pleasure.



## Today's Program

Master of Ceremonies      Dr. Edward H. Hammond  
President, Fort Hays State University

3:00 p.m.      Welcome — Wally Kearns, KSBDc State Director

3:05 p.m.      Introductions — Dr. Hammond

Keynote Speaker — Lori Keegan, CEO/President  
Transition by Design, Inc.

3:30 p.m.      2008 Emerging & Existing Businesses of the Year Video Presentation

3:50 p.m.      Network with Award Recipients

4:20 p.m.      Presentation of Plaques to Award Recipients by their Elected Officials

4:55 p.m.      Closing Remarks — Wally Kearns

*Please join us for a reception immediately following the ceremony.*

# **Keynote Speaker Lori Keegan**

## **A business owner, KSBDC client and motivational presenter all in one.**



Lori Keegan

Lori Keegan, President and CEO of Transition By Design, Inc., will address our Existing and Emerging Small Businesses of the year as a SBDC success story herself. Launching her company in 1998 with SBDC's guidance to blend three careers into one business strategies service, was an adventure of continual innovation and practicing the basics of small business entrepreneurship — over and over again — and is still here and thriving 10 years later. Transition By Design has evolved to be the perfect trusted strategist for family owned businesses, transition and succession of leadership in all sizes of closely-held corporations, NON-confrontational conflict resolution services, and a leader in teaching innovation to small business owners who want to outwit and outlast tough market times.

For more information, see [www.TransitionByDesign.com](http://www.TransitionByDesign.com) or e-mail Lori at: [mail@transitionbydesign.com](mailto:mail@transitionbydesign.com) Tel: 785-235-2500.

Dear Wally & SBDC Staff all over,

On 9-8-98 Transition By Design opened its doors for business. I now have offices in Topeka and Overland Park and clients in at least 14 different states. I have reached every major goal for every service center and projections which I have set over these last 10 years. I am truly one of your success stories.

Listed below are just a few of the items Lori included in her thank you note to the KSBDC.

- I hope you'll celebrate with me, because all my successes are your successes! I went "solo" but I've never been alone.
- Thank you for being so accessible and affordable! And such good listeners!
- Thank you for showing me profoundly how much more important P&L's are than balance sheets! "Cash is King!"
- Thank you for supporting my business being so unique — building a vertical, rather than horizontal, business plan — always keeping quality and my clients first.



***“Do your homework, plan ahead and be prepared to make changes if necessary. Use the KSBDC for support and advice as you start a business and continue to ask them for support during difficult times. They truly want you to succeed and can offer suggestions to keep you in business.”***

# Pet Sitting Pal

2008 ESU KSBDC Existing Business

Reneé Flott

Pets and their owners are fortunate to have Pet Sitting Pal, a pet sitting, pet taxi, and home security service in Emporia. Owner, Reneé Flott loves animals and her customers love her! Pet Sitting Pal gives pets and their owners a choice between boarding kennels and staying at home in their own environment. Since starting the business in 2004, the business has survived the growing pains of many successful small businesses and has grown to its current full capacity. Among the extras offered are certification in animal CPR and First Aid, keeping pets safe and owners at ease. Reneé values the KSBDC: “The services I received from the KSBDC have been extremely beneficial to me. They were able to answer all of my questions, make referrals, and provide much needed workshops. If it weren’t for the KSBDC, I would have paid thousands of dollars for all of the consulting services I received.”

# Eagle Creek Vineyards

## 2008 ESU KSBDC Emerging Business

### Jo Ann Kuhlmann

It's amazing what energy, tenacity, and patience can accomplish! Eagle Creek Vineyards is a prime example. Taking a lot of manual labor, unpredictable weather and equipment, and mixing it with the focus and passion of Jo Ann Kuhlmann is a recipe for success. Four years ago, Eagle Creek Vineyards consisted of 1.5 acres of grape vines. Today it is 18 acres strong, with 10,000 grape vines and 17 grape varieties. It all started in 2004 after Jo Ann thoroughly researched the Kansas wine industry, grape growing, and what it would take to be a successful vineyard with a strong market. The mission for this business is to perpetuate the family farm and be good land stewards using sustainable agricultural practices while producing high quality wine grapes for Kansas wineries. This focused mission has provided the foundation for the success of Eagle Creek Vineyards and has created an impressive enterprise for Kansas to be proud of!

***“Do your research for all aspects of the business. Technical knowledge is crucial, but that alone does not guarantee the success of a business. Inventory your strengths and weaknesses. Build on your strengths and seek knowledgeable, unbiased assistance to bolster your weak areas.”***







***“Go after it – but only after you’ve done what’s necessary. Ask yourself some key questions. First: Am I passionate? Second: Is there a need? Third: Am I able to invest the time? Fourth: Do the numbers work?”***

# **The Furniture Look, Inc.**

2008 FHSU KSBDC Existing Business

Karen Dreiling

After working more than ten years for another furniture store, Karen Dreiling opened her own business. For the last 17 years, The Furniture Look has placed items in homes while following the policy that clients are more comfortable trusting their home purchases to someone who is not only good at what they do, but also has fun doing it. In 1991, with her knowledge, a great list of clients and low overhead, she knew she could achieve her goal of providing quality furniture at affordable prices. The business plan was in her head but putting it on paper was quite different. The research, budgeting, accounting, and promoting were just some of the key elements where the KSBDC assisted. “Without the cash flow spread sheet the KSBDC had me do, I’m not sure I would have made it. It gave me knowledge and discipline in areas such as inventory control, advertising, salaries, etc,” Karen explained.

# Flower Cottage

2008 FHSU KSBDC Emerging Business

Kathy and Bob Kuntz

Prior to starting a new business, Bob and Kathy worked together on their ranch, raising a cow/calf herd operation and farming crops for over 30 years. During her spare time on the farm, Kathy started a craft business in their home called, "Kathy's Love Buds." In 2005, together, they opened the Flower Cottage serving the needs of their community with floral arrangements and gifts. "With no experience in retail at all except a little designing from my previous business and job, the FHSU KSBDC pointed out numerous situations that would be involved in owning a retail business. There will be advertising, marketing, accounting, buying inventory, employees, renovating the building, commitment; the list didn't end. Our counselor was professional, honest, and from knowing us in the community, she believed in us. A big thank you to the FHSU KSBDC for helping us in the right direction to fulfill a dream."

***"Smile always and laugh before answering the phone. Always care about each and every customer as if they were family/friends. Take a special interest in all the children entering your door. Help the elderly in and out of your store. Have a clean bathroom. Listen to your employees and make them feel a part of the business."***





***“Building a reputation as a business that has excellent customer service, quality products and competitive prices is key. Customer service comes first and with those standards, we have built strong business relationships.”***

# EmbroidMe

2008 GCCC KSBDC Existing Business

Gavin and Kim Unruh

After researching many franchise options, Gavin & Kim Unruh decided on EmbroidMe, a Florida based franchise that already had a reputation for superior customer service. They have now been in business over five years and have received multiple company awards for their EmbroidMe store in Dodge City. They value the freedom they have found in entrepreneurship that allows them to support causes that make a difference in life. Their business features goods and services ranging from custom embroidery and printing to personalized gifts and promotional items. They are active in local communities and have built their success on outstanding customer service. They came to the GCCC KSBDC as a startup seeking funding for assistance putting together a business plan and financial projections. “The help that our KSBDC connection gave us was vital to our preparation to go to banks and seek the financing we needed. Helping us put together our financial projections gave us the credibility that made a difference when we met with the banker,” Gavin and Kim agreed.

# Oswalt Appraisals of Garden City

## 2008 GCCC KSBDC Emerging Business

### Alan Oswalt

Alan Oswalt discovered his passion while assisting people who had found their own. It was during the time that he was a KSBDC consultant that he decided to follow an interest in the appraisal industry. He took classes and obtained licensure. He applied the skills he had been teaching to open his own part-time business which grew steadily. After experiencing rapid growth, his goal to become independent came sooner than expected. He soon left the KSBDC to devote himself to the appraisal business full time. With continued growth, he added employees to the business to increase efficiency. In order to ensure accuracy and high quality, he uses a set procedure and review checklist for his work. He encourages entrepreneurship in others and says "The KSBDC helped me put together a business plan and financials. The cash flow analysis was especially important so I understand where the money goes."

***"Our secret to success is customer service — giving them what they want, when they want it and delivering on time, every time, while maintaining highest quality. We show our clients that we really do care — which has helped us grow the business."***





***“Set your goals and develop your plan to achieve them. Then accept the fact that there’s nothing wrong with changing the plan as you go, so long as you keep the goal in mind.”***

# AVON Beauty Center

2008 JCCC KSBDC Existing Business

Elizabeth and George Demas

Elizabeth Demas set out to own her own business and found what she was looking for in Avon. She opened an Avon Sales & Training Center in 2004 and then a Licensed AVON Beauty Center in 2005. Six months later, she sought the services offered by the KSBDC. The Overland Park AVON Beauty Center has exponentially grown since, becoming one of the top Avon stores in the nation. Customers receive the personal, hands-on, attention of a knowledgeable sales staff, minus the wait normally associated with placing an Avon order. Elizabeth is thankful for the KSBDC support: “When I first visited the KSBDC office, I didn’t really know what they could do to help my business. Now I know that whatever I need, the KSBDC staff is there to support me. Whether I need advice on a business loan, help with store layout, merchandising and display or any business-related quandary they have been there to help along the way. I am thankful for the day I decided to walk in that door.”

# Music House School of Music

2008 JCCC KSBDC Emerging Business

Aaron Sizemore and Katrinka Riggs

From classical instruction to Rock Band workshops, Music House School of Music provides a bridge to music performance and appreciation for people of all ages. Professional musicians, Aaron Sizemore and Katrinka Riggs, created Music House in order to provide an outlet for students to play the music they like while learning how to play. The unique culture of Music House embodies the school's motto: Learn, Play, Perform. Aaron and Katrinka enlisted the help of the KSBDC in May 2006. They worked with KSBDC consultant Elisa Waldman in many areas including: business plan development, startup funding, site location, leasing, and marketing. "We continue to learn as we grow," explained Aaron and Katrinka. "The KSBDC has been our most helpful resource." Music House is home to over 400 students and 22 instructors. In 2009, Music House expanded to a 5,100 square-foot studio space that includes a state-of-the-art performance auditorium.

*"The Music House culture and curriculum foster a unique sense of community among Music House students and faculty. Our students and faculty are always striving to learn, play and perform."*





***“I wouldn’t have it any other way. I’d rather be in charge of my own means than dependent on anyone else. I highly recommend business ownership if you put your best into it, have a really good product, and give it everything.”***

# Howard Pine’s Garden Center & Greenhouses

2008 KU KSBDC Existing Business

Gerald Pine

Howard Pine’s Garden Center & Greenhouses was started in 1962 in Lawrence, KS. The company began with four employees. In 1978, Howard Pine’s son, Gerald “Gerry” purchased the business at age 21 and continues to own and operate the business. Since that time, the business has continued to grow physically and financially. Howard Pine’s Garden Center & Greenhouses currently employs 22-24 people and has seven greenhouses on the property. Over the years, in addition to growth, the business has experienced the hardships of being a weather-affected business as well as a seasonal operation. Gerry first contacted the KU SBDC seeking assistance in outlining his financial position clearly so that he could better manage his revolving line of credit due to the seasonal nature of the business. Through this counseling, he has gained a clearer understanding and perspective of the company’s cash position and how to plan financially.

# Local Burger

## 2008 KU KSBDC Emerging Business

### Hilary Brown

***“My secret to success is passion. I am doing exactly what I want to do. I really enjoy overcoming all of the daily challenges and growing and getting better at what I do everyday.”***

For years, Hilary Brown wanted to introduce people to healthy fast food options. “Everything is connected,” she says. “Our food, our environment, our health, and our communities.” When Local Burger opened its doors in September of 2005, Hilary’s dream became a reality. Local Burger offers a unique brand of food that features fresh, organic, local, and sustainable fare that is free of unnatural additives and preservatives. Hilary contacted the KSBDC more than a year before she opened the doors of her restaurant. “I had been thinking about the idea for a long time, but I knew I needed some direction,” Hilary explains. “The KSBDC counselors helped me put together the business plan. More importantly, they also helped to keep me focused and motivated.” In the future, the company has two major challenges: expanding to multiple locations, and manufacturing/distributing their World’s Best Veggie Burger. Hilary plans on checking in with her KSBDC counselors regularly as her business systems continue to evolve.







***“Start slowly; do not try to grow too fast. Make sure there is a need for the product or service you are offering. Get help from the KSBDC in developing a business plan and financing.”***

# Acorn Valley Custom Cabinetry

2008 PSU KSBDC Existing Business

Bob Greif and Jim Houston

Bob Greif and Jim Houston began their custom cabinet making business in 2001 as a part-time “after work/weekend” business which they then grew to a full-time venture. They utilized the services of the PSU KSBDC in helping with the business plan, financial projections, and marketing strategies that allowed them to successfully undertake this expansion. The company designs and manufactures custom cabinets for kitchens, bathrooms, home entertainment systems, and offices in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas. They strive for 100% customer satisfaction and attribute their success to their exceptional employees who have an excellent work ethic. Most of all, however, they attribute their success to their faith and trust in God. Bob and Jim credit the PSU KSBDC for the help and support they received: “Our business would not be here today without the help and support of the KSBDC. We are very grateful for their help and for being so easy to work with. Thank you KSBDC!”

# Oakview Estates Assisted Living

2008 PSU KSBDC Emerging Business

Mark Scales and Jason Lahr

Mark Scales' idea for his assisted living facility came from his parents who had considered such a venture 20 years prior when the industry was just emerging. After extensive research, Mark partnered with a college friend and in 2005 was able to realize his dream of such a facility which is designed to assist elderly persons who are able to care for themselves except for a few daily activities such as preparing meals and performing household chores. Mark credits the PSU KSBDC for their assistance: "Without the KSBDC, we would not be in business today. They were instrumental in helping put together our market research, business plan and financing. With their help, our business plan has exceeded our expectations. We were at 100% occupancy by the end of the first year, have built on six more units which were full before completion, and continue to run at 100% occupancy in our third year of operation."

***"Take time to research the project. Visit other businesses of the same nature including the competition. Seek help from the KSBDC in doing market research, developing a good business plan and financial projections."***



# Morrill Collision Repair, Inc.

2008 WU KSBDC Existing Business

Lonnie and Melanie Teeter



***“Our desire is that customers will be 100% satisfied and share their experience with friends.”***

Lonnie and Melanie Teeter began thinking about owning their own collision repair business in 1998. For two years they operated a home-based business doing collision repair work out of the family one-car garage. Lonnie was employed full time as a repair specialist for another company, so they worked evenings and weekends to gradually build business. In 1999, they started making plans for a building and business location on Main Street in Morrill. Today, Morrill Collision Repair, Inc. is a modernized and up-to-date 7,300 square-foot operation. The Washburn University SBDC assisted the Teeters in writing the initial business plan in 2000 and with the 2008 business plan to obtain financing for business expansion. Careful analysis was taken to look at forecasting business revenues in repairing damaged vehicles and projected costs for profitable levels of operation. “The SBDC also gave us technical assistance on setting up QuickBooks, income tax advice, and input on what type of business entity to form,” explained Lonnie.

# New Boston Creative Group, LLC

2008 WU KSBDC Emerging Business

Kristin Brighton, Susan Religa and Lisa Sisley

Kristin Brighton, Susan Religa and Lisa Sisley were all self-employed in marketing and communications. They found themselves collaborating more and more frequently and merged in early 2006 once it became clear that a company like theirs was needed in the Manhattan area. One of New Boston Creative Group's first projects was the highly acclaimed Manhattan 24/7 marketing campaign. For NBCG, "the best part about being an entrepreneur is the ability to control our own destiny. Whether we play it safe or go out on a limb, it's our decision and nobody else's." The KSBDC was a valuable resource to NBCG. "The staff provided assistance in writing the business plan, determining what to charge and even brainstorming what types of services to offer. They showed a real interest in helping us." The group has received numerous awards for their work and strives to provide the best marketing and communication services possible.

***"Find a true need and fill it. Look for actual gaps in your market. Will people really pay for what you can do? Can you do it better than your competition?"***





***“Selling is making enough sales calls, make the right type of sales calls, and calling on the right type of customers. Once you get a customer — work to keep them. It’s easy to get a customer — it’s a lot harder to keep them.”***

# ServiceMaster by Clean In a Wink

2008 WSU KSBDC Existing Business

Jerry E. Winkley

Twenty-one years ago Jerry Winkley was looking for a career change. He had been working as a diesel mechanic and was considering family farming but was open to new ideas. Each day, he and his wife would listen to Paul Harvey’s radio talk show over lunch. Repeatedly he heard Mr. Harvey mention ServiceMaster, a franchise opportunity that one day intrigued him enough to request the packet of information. In January 1988, Jerry, his wife Lisa, and their two small children moved to Wichita to start their ServiceMaster business. When Jerry was considering an expansion and acquisition he contacted the WSU SBDC. “I have great support through our ServiceMaster Franchise System, but KSBDC brings a valuable outside perspective that is more focused in my local economy with knowledge of my industry as a whole and various other industries. I have worked on strategic planning with KSBDC, worked through acquisition issues, worked on management structure, and financial planning,” Jerry said.

# Longford Water Company, LLC

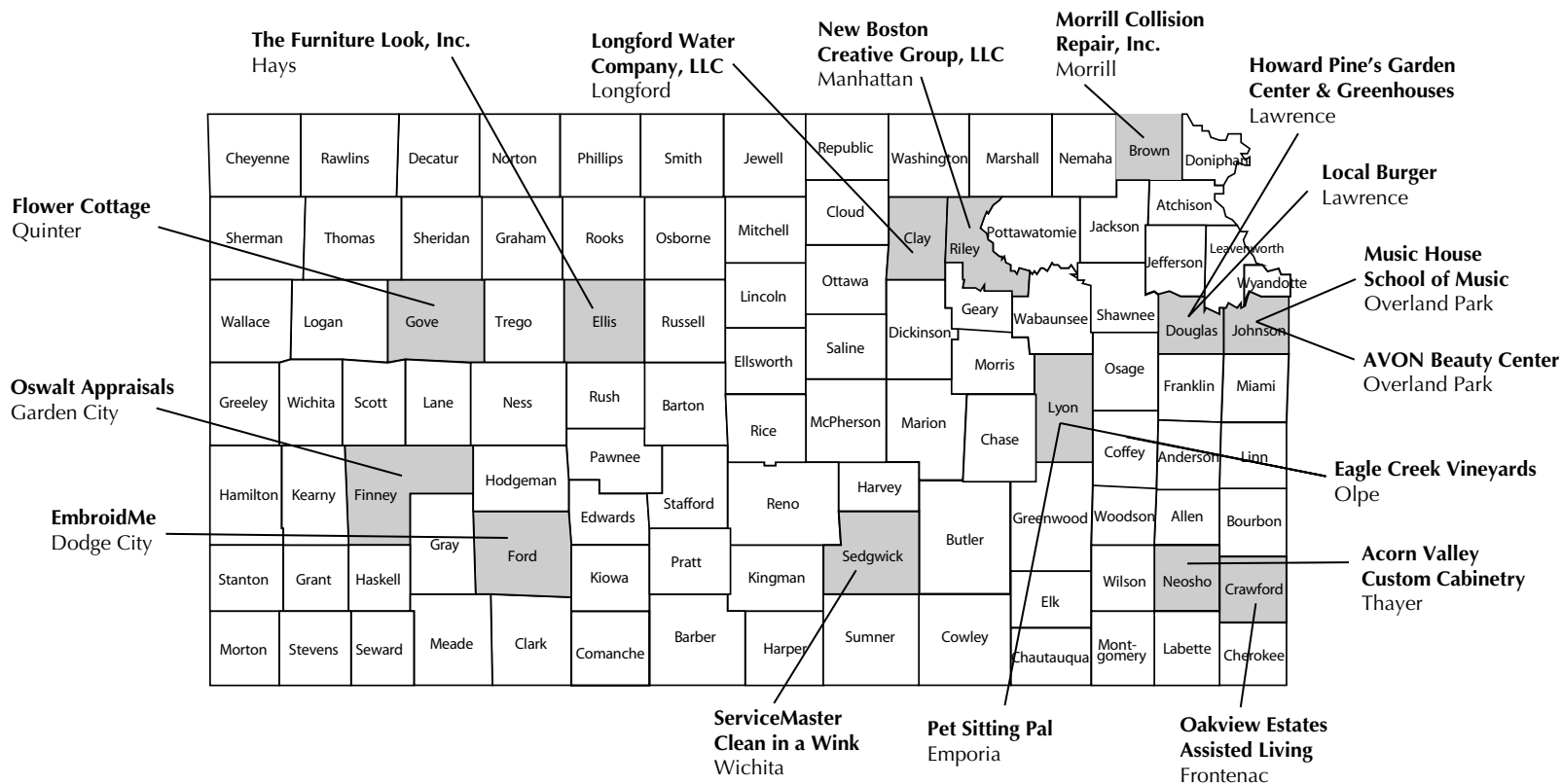
2008 WSU CCCC KSBDC Emerging Business

Kim and Wava Kramer

***“Do extensive research. Don’t shortcut on organizational costs or professional assistance. Run it like a business; make money from the beginning; risk no more than you can afford to lose.”***

In 2004, a group of people requested assistance from the WSU KSBDC outreach center at Cloud County Community College for market research on the idea to bottle Longford water. Once determined feasible, a business plan was created. In the fall of 2004, 25 investors formed Longford Water Company, LLC and financed the entire project through local private funds. The Longford Water Company began operation in May 2005. Longford groundwater, filtered by the underground Kiowa Rock Formation, is bottled and marketed as Kiowata. The business has grown as it found a niche in private labeling for schools, churches, events and businesses primarily in Kansas. “It is great to have the KSBDC on your side. They are helpful in steering you in the right direction. Linda Sutton is very knowledgeable in her field and stays up to date with new programs and resources available. She gives you encouragement and support you need on a daily basis,” Wava said.







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Thank you for your support and involvement in today's activities.

